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DEPARTMENT FOR AF AND AF/E , AND INR/AA
LONDON, PARIS, ROME FOR AFRICA WATCHER
CJTF-HOA AND USCENTCOM FOR POLAD

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/21/2018
TAGS: [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [KPKO](#) [SO](#) [ET](#)
SUBJECT: SOMALILAND PRESIDENT WELCOMES A CLOSER
RELATIONSHIP WITH WASHINGTON

Classified By: Amb. Donald Yamamoto for Reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

11. (S/NF) SUMMARY. Somaliland President Dahir Riyale Kahin told the Ambassador and PolOff on February 21 that his government was ready to increase the bilateral relationship between Hargeysa and Washington. Kahin said that he had ordered his government to work with Washington without restrictions. Kahin stated that he was committed to holding the upcoming Somaliland elections and that he would respect the outcome and step down if he lost. Lastly, Kahin repeated his long held refrain that Puntland was not a legitimate state and that he did not care whether the Puntland President visited Washington. END SUMMARY.

"WE WANT TO WORK WITH THE UNITED STATES"

12. (S/NF) The Ambassador opened the meeting by inquiring about Kahin's recent visit to Washington and noting that follow-up between Washington and Hargeysa would be needed to move the bilateral relationship forward. Kahin agreed and expressed great pleasure that A/S Frazer was able to visit Hargeysa so quickly after his visit to the United States. Kahin agreed with the Ambassador that Kahin establish a focal point for direct communication with Washington and he suggested his Minister of Finance would be the best point of contact. The Ambassador added that Somaliland needed to work more closely with US government agencies, particularly regarding information sharing. Kahin said that he had ordered his new intelligence chief to cooperate with the U.S. without restrictions and that he had given his government a green light to work with Washington. Kahin stressed that Somaliland and the US had the same enemies, but noted that his government was running out of resources to fight terrorism and that they needed help with training and equipment.

"I WILL RESPECT THE ELECTION OUTCOME"

13. (C) When the Ambassador inquired about Somaliland's upcoming elections, Kahin responded that he was committed to holding the elections and that if another candidate won he would, "say hello and get out of the way." Kahin

emphatically stated that the elections would be peaceful, as had Somaliland's previous three elections, and that the Somaliland people did not have any appetite for instability and violence.

"NO ROOM IN SOMALIA FOR PUNTLAND"

14. (C) The Ambassador noted that Puntland President Mohamed Muse Hersi, cognizant of Kahin's recent Washington trip, now wanted to visit the U.S. Kahin responded dismissively, expressing that it made no difference to him what Hersi did. Kahin went on to explain, in an entirely predictable response, that Somalia was two countries, not three, and that Puntland was not a legitimate state. Kahin alleged that it would be easy for Somaliland to dismantle Puntland, but that Somaliland was showing tolerance and "taking the high ground."

COMMENT

15. (C) President Kahin was clearly pleased with his recent trip to Washington and it is apparent that he believes closer cooperation with Washington is his country's best hope for achieving formal recognition. Nevertheless, only time will tell whether Kahin's desire to work more closely with Washington will move from word to deed. Continued engagement from Washington probably will be necessary to ensure the election is held as freely and fairly as possible. END
COMMENT.
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